



Department of
Agriculture

Forestry

Tornado Damage Natchez Trace State Forest December 10, 2021

Tennessee Department of Agriculture | January 2022



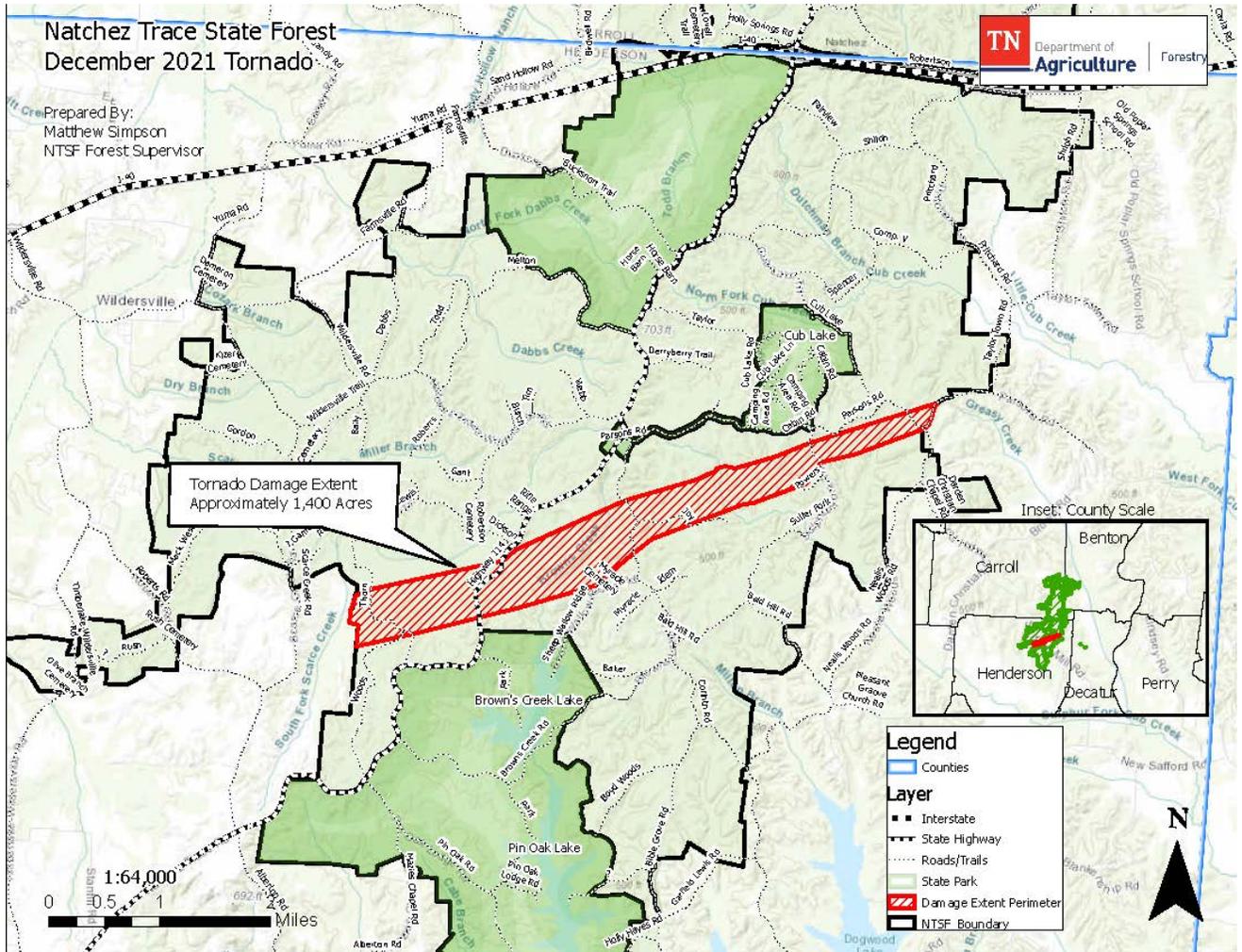
Executive Summary

Natchez Trace State Forest, located in Henderson, Carroll, and Benton counties, was struck directly by a tornado on December 10, 2021. As soon as the storm passed and conditions were safe, Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) personnel cleared roads and assessed the damage. Initial estimates indicate up to 1,400 acres of forestland were affected. All the damage appears to be on the southern section of the forest in Henderson County.

Action & Assessment

- TDF cleared all primary forest roads of downed trees.
- TDF mapped damaged areas using our new Unmanned Aircraft Systems program and available geographic information system resources.
- A salvage is necessary to improve forest health by reducing risk of disease infestation and to rehabilitate the area for multiple use benefits.
- It will take 2-to-3 months to completely map and designate appropriate harvest areas for salvage.
- Salvage operations should be carried out in a timely manner before rot or staining can affect the value of the wood, and to take advantage of strong timber markets.
- Scheduled harvests not affected by the tornado damage will take place as planned.

Preliminary Extent of Tornado Damage



The damage occurred in a very clear destructive path running west to east across the southern end of the forest. The damaged area was approximately a ¼-½ mile wide and 5.5 miles long. Damage included trees completely blown over with root ball still attached, trees snapped off midway up the trunk, partially blown over and leaning, or hardly affected at all. Downed trees fell in many different directions, creating a challenging situation for cleanup and salvage operations. It is anticipated that many of the larger trees can be salvaged for sawtimber. The snapped and twisted trees will likely be reduced to pulpwood.





Next Steps

- Complete mapping and damage assessment while developing strategies for salvage operations.
- Depending on weather, salvage operations could begin as early as March and continue into next year's harvest season.
- Develop strategies for reforestation by determining where natural regeneration or planting is necessary to maintain the proper hardwood or pine forest types.

Conclusion

The Division of Forestry is committed to inform the public on the status of this natural disaster. TDF invites legislators or citizens who would like to tour the damaged area to contact TDF for scheduling. All questions or concerns can be directed to:

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